



Chapter News

March 2026

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Cradle of Texas Chapter

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AgriLife Extension Service and Texas
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TMN programs serve all people
without regard to socio-economic
level, race, color, sex, disability,
religion, age, or national origin.

Cover Photo: Texas Paintbrush
by Patty Brinkmeyer

President's Message



"Whatever comes, let it come. Whatever stays, let it stay. Whatever goes, let it go." – Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Spring isn't officially here, yet for our TMN chapter, Spring is in full swing! This past weekend, we had our 9th Annual AT Day, with just over 100 attendees! That might be a record! Many thanks to Kristine Rivers and her committee for another great Training Day.

Thank you also to Rose Wagner and her group of volunteers who brought food, made coffee, and kept us well fed, as always. Thanks are also in order to Phil Huxford for bringing his sound system, ensuring we could hear our presenters. Special thanks to our AgriLife Advisor, John O'Connell for bringing all the Water Fair equipment and setting it up. And, thanks to Oron Atkins and Sam Dufilho who kept us parking between the lines. It really does take a lot of members to plan and execute, and our Chapter really excels at this. I spoke to members from other chapters who were in attendance, and they were all very appreciative and complementary of our efforts. From the people I talked to, we might be the only chapter in the Houston area that holds Training day events for their members (and we have TWO each year!)

Take a look at our online calendar, and you'll see there are MANY events that will need YOUR help. DEEP sessions, Spring Break Open House, Nature Day, and before you know it, we'll be at all the libraries in June and July. Maybe we get a short break in August!! I know that sometimes it can feel overwhelming and maybe we take some time off. Its ok – everyone needs a break. I hope, though, that many of you will take on something new this spring. Maybe you'll find a new "favorite" service opportunity! And if you find that you're no longer able to do some event, review the calendar or the list of opportunities in each newsletter for something else that might catch your eye. Whether you can spend a lot of time or a little time, every hour is a blessing to someone or some thing in our area! Our next meeting will be March 11th, at 6 pm at AgriLife. Kathy Adams Clark, noted photographer and author, will be sharing photos of Moths of Texas. I hope you will come join us!

Thank you for all you do for our area, and see you soon, OUTSIDE!!!!

Kathy Pittman

Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach. -Clarissa Pinkola Estes

March Chapter Meeting

The March 11th General Meeting will be a hybrid:

Attend in person at the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, 21017 County Road 171, Angleton, TX, or virtually via e-mail invite. Visitors and guests are welcome. Odd months are held in the evening. Even months are held in the morning.

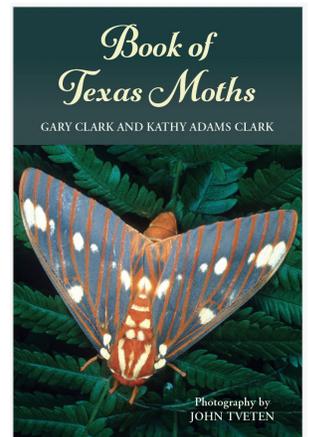
5:30 – 6:00 pm	Social Time and Refreshments
6:00 – 6:15 pm	Welcome and Awards
6:15 – 7:15 pm	<p>Speaker: Kathy Adams Clark Topic: Moths of Texas</p> <p>How often do we pass by moths under a porch light or fluttering under a streetlamp without giving them a second glance? Yet moths, far more plentiful than butterflies, with their intricate patterns and curious coloration often emerge as beautiful as butterflies. During this program by Kathy Adams Clark, learn how she and her husband Gary Clark, close friends and proteges of John and Gloria Tveten, set out to transcribe and publish Tveten’s field notes alongside the corresponding photographs.</p>
7:15 – 8:00 pm	<p>General Membership Meeting <i>(Hours for Volunteer Service (VS) and Advanced Training (AT) TBD at close of meeting)</i></p>



Kathy Adams Clark has been a professional nature photographer since 1995. Kathy’s photos have been published in hundreds of places including Family Fun,, Nature's Best, New York Times, Birder's World, and Ranger Rick. AAA Journey, Texas Parks & Wildlife and Texas Highways Magazine has used Kathy’s photos on their cover. Her photos have also appeared in a numerous books and calendars including the Barnes & Noble Ireland Countryside Calendar, the cover of the Arbor Foundation Rainforest Calendar, and the Sierra Engagement Calendar. Kathy’s photos of Houston were compiled into a calendar offered in Costco.

Her photos appear every week in the "Nature" column in the Houston Chronicle written by her husband, Gary Clark. Kathy and Gary have worked with national publishing houses to produce ten books that combine their photography and writing skills. Their latest books are Book of Texas Birds published by Texas A&M University Press and Backroads of Texas published by Voyageur Press.

Kathy’s photography is featured in Portrait of Houston published by Farcountry Press. Photographing Big Bend National Park, published by Texas A&M Press, is written by Kathy and uses her photography throughout. Kathy is Past-president of the North American Nature Photography Association. She teaches photography and is a popular speaker at local and national events. She leads photo tours through Strabo Tours to countries including Costa Rica, Brazil, Spain, Africa, Italy, Peru, Morocco, and Norway.



April Speaker: Jace Tunnel – Beachcombing the Texas Coast

Outreach Opportunities

DEEP – Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge – 3/24, 3/26, 5/5 ; contact [Lee Gaston](#)

Spring Break BNWR Discovery Center Open House – 3/7 – 3/14 11 am – 4 pm; contact [Ruby Lewis](#)

TMN-COT Calendar <https://txmn.org/tmncot/events>

[Migration Celebration](#) – San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge – 4/25 & 4/26, 11:00 am – 4:00 pm; contact [Barbara Whaley](#) Sign up for shifts here [SIGN UP](#)

Sea Center Texas – Nature Day – 4/18, 11 am – 3 pm; contact [Ruby Lewis](#)

Volunteer Opportunities

Beach Sweep – Monday, April 6th (weather permitting), 8:00 am – 10:00 am

Contact [Jimmy Salinas](#) 979-824-4008 or [Luanne Salinas](#)

Odd months: Meet at the Quintana Jetty parking area.

Even months: Meet on the beach at the Quintana Beach 16th street entrance.

NestFest 2025 - Follet's Island, Quintana Beach, 3/10, 9:00 am – noon. Join NestFest to remove marine debris from nesting habitats for birds and sea turtles. Volunteer participation will require registration.

<https://www.splashtx.org/nestfest>

GCBO 2026 Spring Fling - Quintana Neotropical Bird Sanctuary; April 4 – May 2, 9 – 4 daily; contact [Celeste Silling](#) [Sign up with the online calendar](#)

ONGOING:

Exploration Green Workday – every Wednesday, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm; contact [Christie Taylor](#)

Camp Mohawk Pocket Prairie – workdays TBA; contact [Dick Schaffhausen](#)

Resoft Park Pollinator Gardens – workdays TBA; contact [Kate Harris](#)

DFNC Educational Pond and Native Garden Habitat Workdays – March 19th & 21st, 9 am – noon
3rd Saturdays and preceding Thursday, Contact [Kathy Pittman](#)

Upcoming Construction Projects (TBA) – contact [Oron Atkins](#)

Citizen Science:

TMN-COT iNaturalist Data Collection Project; contact [Amanda Gabehart](#)

Trash Collection/Disposal Analysis Project – self-directed; [BCPD](#)

Adopt-a-Loop for TMN – self-directed; contact [Cris Tobola](#).

Nurdle Beach Patrol – self-directed; <https://www.nurdlepatrol.org/app/>

Time to Restore Project – self-directed; contact [Kathy Pittman](#)

Yellow-Legged Hornet Project (TBA) – contact [Oron Atkins](#)

SPRING AT DAY 2026

Water, Water Everywhere



Andrew Sansom, Ph.D.
Keynote Speaker

The Spring AT Day was a great success. We were honored to have Andrew Sansom, Founder of Meadows Center for Water and the Environment, Texas State University as our Keynote Speaker on the topic of The State of Water in Texas.

Hands on activities included: Spinners, Enviroscape, Groundwater Model, Stream Table and Rainfall Simulator.

There was also a display contest, raffle and door prizes.

Additional Speakers



Joe Ripple

How High's The Water, Mama?

Joe Ripple, Brazoria County Floodplain Director
Rebecca McCord Whitlock, Senior Director,
FEMA Services, GrantWorks

From Pilot to Progress: Inside BWA's Desalination Project

Wendy Turner, Assistant General Manager & Chief
Administrative Officer, Brazosport Water Authority

Ocean Chemistry and Resilient Marine Biota

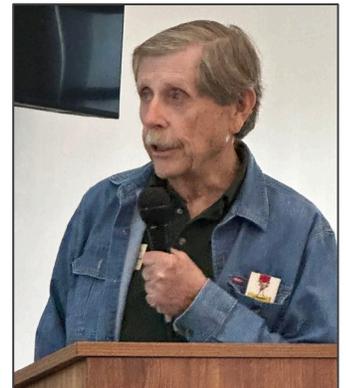
Marty Cornell, Texas Master Naturalist
Cradle of Texas Chapter



Rebecca McCord Whitlock



Wendy Turner



Marty Cornell



AT Day Committee

Project Lead: Kristine Rivers

Committee:

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Oron Atkins | John O'Connell |
| Sarah Castillo | Kathy Pittman |
| Mickey Dufilho | Jimmy Salinas |
| Angela Griffin | Luanne Salinas |
| Mel McKey | Rose Wagner |
| John O'Connell | |



Photos contributed by Dick Schaffhausen, Kristine Rivers and Angela Griffin

Certifications February 2025

Congratulations to all!

Recertifications

Oron Atkins
David Brandes
Kathy Pittman
Richard Schaffhausen
Barbara Whaley



2026 Pin

Bobcat

*John Boettiger,
Membership Director*

January Certifications recognized at the February meeting:



Initial Certification

Susan Barnes,
Barbara Whaley; Training Director



Milestones

Kathy Pittman – 2500 Hours
Ana Loonam – 250 hours
John Boettiger; Membership Director

FAMILY SATURNIIDAE

Giant Moths of Brazoria County

Contributed by Patty Brinkmeyer

Regal Moth

Citheronia regalis



Host Plants: Pecan, Hickory, Walnut, Common Persimmon, Buttonbush, American Sycamore

Count yourself lucky if you spot one of these short-lived moths. Living less than a week, their entire adult life is spent mating and laying eggs.

The family Saturniidae have underdeveloped, non-functional mouthparts. They do not eat as adults.

Not only are they beautiful, but these moths develop from some of the most striking caterpillars you'll ever see.

The Hickory Horned Devil; the caterpillar form of the Regal moth, burrows into the soil to pupate. The Cecropia, Luna and Polyphemus moths spin silken cocoons.

Run out and get some host plants, now!

Luna Moth

Actias luna



Host Plants: Pecan, Hickory, Walnut, Common Persimmon, Sweetgum, Sumacs

Cecropia Moth

Hyalophora cecropia



Host Plants: Mexican Plum, Black Cherry, Dogwoods, Elms, Wax Myrtle, Ashes

Polyphemus Moth

Antheraea polyphemus



Host Plants: Oak, Birch, Willow, Maple



Great Bat Bridge Survey

A Texas Parks & Wildlife Project

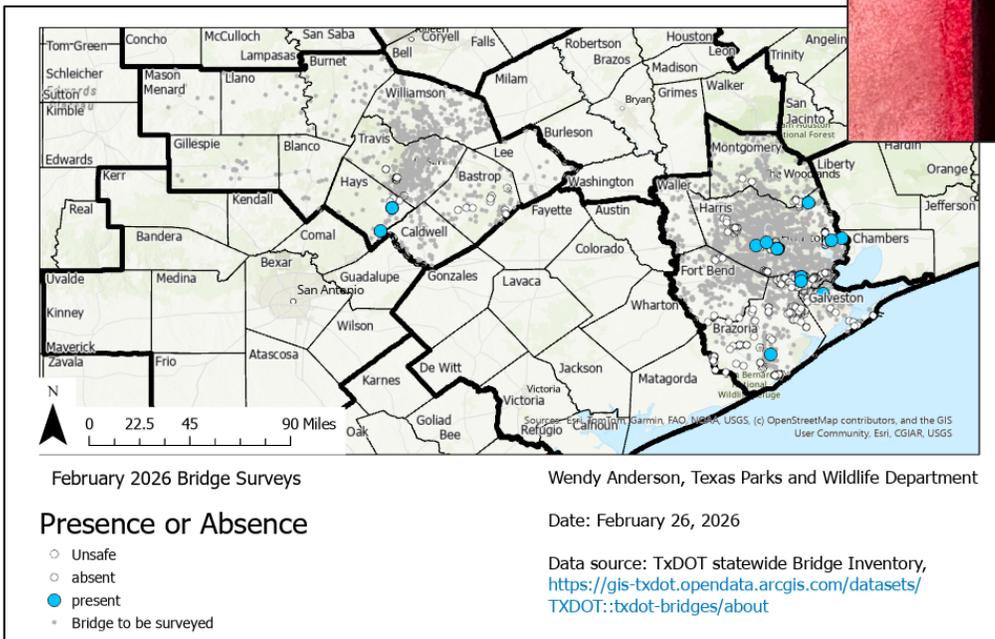


On February 22nd, several teams of COT members surveyed a total of 122 bridges in Brazoria County looking for bats. Two bridges had bats. Kyle and Kathy Purvis found bats under a bridge on 288B, and Susan Barnes went to Hempstead to survey a bridge requested by Wendy Anderson (TPWD) and it was found to have bats.

Statewide, 315 bridges were surveyed, with a whopping 39% of bridges surveyed by COT members. Great job team!

Project Lead: Mickey Dufilho

Participating members: Janet Townsend, Robin Townsend, Richard Schaffhausen, Donna Rich, Glen Cullinane, Amanda Smith, Emily Howard, Melanie Hollenshead, Amanda Gabehart, Betty Skweres, David Skweres, Oron Atkins, Kim Calhoun, Kathy Pittman, Scott Brown, Jodi Jung, Nannette Daugherty, Susan Barnes, Kathy Purvis, Kyle Purvis, Rose Wagner, Brian Hanson, Paula Hanson



A red filter is used on the flashlight as to not disturb the bats with a bright light.



It's that time of year!

Event Set up
 Van Pick up
 Parking
 Golf Cart Guest
 Transport
 Bake Sale Booth
 Information Booth
 Nature Store
 Van Tour Shuttle
 Volunteer Tent
 Kayaking
 Pond Life
 Bug Sweeping
 Butterfly Tent
 COT/FOBWR Exhibit

EAT
 SLEEP
 VOLUNTEER
 REPEAT

Face Painting
 Fish Printing
 Marsh Buggy Tours
 Microscope
 Projection
 Moccasin Pond Tour
 Photo Contest
 Display
 Reptiles
 Skull, Pelts & Tracks
 Turtle Patrol
 Program
 Wingspan
 Clean up
 Van return

Please SIGN UP for 1 or more shifts at
 MIGRATION CELEBRATION!

Contact Barbara Whaley for info

TMN-COT 2026 Impact Data		February*	YTD
Hours	VS	951	1,824
	AT	351	470
	Total	1,302	2,294
Impact Data	Adults	1	147
	Youth	2	2
	Total	3	149

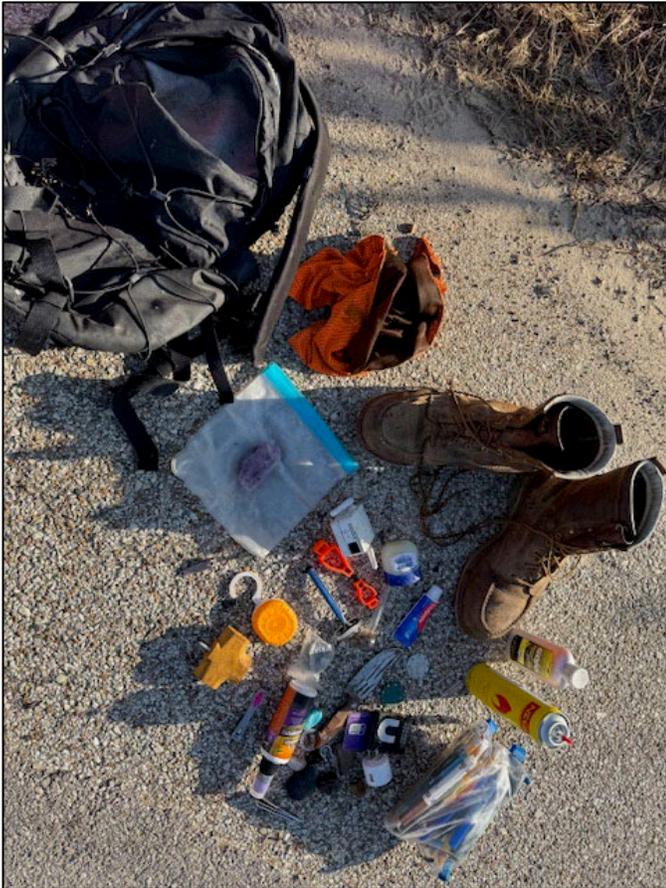
*will not be considered final until mid-April 2026

Dave Brandes, Data Manager

February Beach Sweep

Contributed by Jimmy and Luanne Salinas

Well, we definitely scored a touchdown 🏈 today with our rescheduled February Beach Sweep. The weather could not have been more perfect and the spirits of the volunteers who showed up were contagious! We had some new help, Elsa from Quintana and Hugo and Leo from the County Parks Dept. Had some interesting "finds" during this sweep, and we left the environment better than we found it. Thanks again to our partners, City of Quintana for providing the volunteers and morning snacks, and all those TMN members and the county employees who showed up to enjoy this beautiful day.



Here's a summary of your recent cleanup:

Date	February 09, 2026
Duration	1 hours 26 minutes
Number of People	11
Weight of Trash Picked Up	77.8 lbs
Group Name	Team Q

Your cleanup makes a difference! Thank you for being part of a global community, identifying ocean trash and helping find solutions. Check out what others are cleaning and more ways to get involved at <https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/international-coastal-cleanup/icc/>. (Reprint courtesy of Ocean Conservancy)

Cradle of Texas Chapter Board

President	Kathy Pittman, Rosharon
Vice President/Programs	Jimmy Salinas, Freeport
Secretary	Donna Rich, Angleton
Treasurer	Amanda Smith, Angleton
State Representative	David Skweres, Houston
Immediate Past President	Mickey Dufilho, Brazoria
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Fall Training Director	Barbara Whaley, Alvin
Membership Director	John Boettiger, Lake Jackson
Advanced Training Director	Kristine Rivers, Manvel
Volunteer Service Director	Oron Atkins, Lake Jackson
Outreach Director	Ruby Lewis, Angleton
Hospitality Director	Rose Wagner, Sweeny
Communications Director	Patty Brinkmeyer, Brazoria
Training Class Representative 2025	Betty Skweres, Houston
Training Class Representative 2025	Nannette Daugherty
Chapter Advisors	John O'Connell, AgriLife Extension Service Jordan Kieffer, TPWD Sea Center Texas
Non-voting positions:	
Chapter Librarian	Debbie Nance, Alvin
Data Manager	Dave Brandes, Lake Jackson
Newsletter Editor	Patty Brinkmeyer, Brazoria
Newsletter Contributors	Kathy Pittman, Dave Brandes, John Boettiger, Jimmy Salinas Luanne Salinas, Patty Brinkmeyer, Mickey Dufhilo, Kristine Rivers, Angela Griffin, Dick Schaffhaussen
Website	https://txmn.org/tmncot/
Facebook	http://facebook.com/TMN-COT
E-mail Listserv	http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-Mail

Texas Master Naturalist Email Lists

TMN-COT Chapter list

- Instructions <https://txmn.org/tmncot/organization/email-lists/>
- Send messages to COT members TMN-COT@googlegroups.com
- Message Archive <http://tinyurl.com/TMN-COT-Mail>
- All messages are sent immediately.

State Master Naturalist list

- Instructions <http://txmn.org/staying-connected/sign-up-for-tmn-listserv/>
- Subscribe listserv@listserv.tamu.edu
- All messages are held for moderation by the TMN State Coordinator.

Chapter News is published monthly on the weekend following the monthly Board Meeting (first Wednesday of each month) by the Texas Master Naturalist Cradle of Texas Chapter.

Submissions are welcome; submission deadline is 5:00 PM on Thursday before the last weekend of the month preceding the newsletter.

Send submissions by e-mail to *Chapter News* Editor at news@tmn-cot.org.

Submissions may be edited for clarity and spacing.

